

Dear friends,

With the final drop of the speaker's gavel, the U.S. House of Representatives has adjourned for the year. This historic chamber, which has been witness to so many national trials and triumphs, has fallen silent until January, 2010.

The light that shines atop the Capitol dome – signaling that Congress is in session – will soon dim as lawmakers of all political backgrounds travel far away from this city of too much self importance to seek the warm embrace and familiar solace of loved ones.

It's time to set aside the rancor and the discourse - even if for just a few days - to ponder upon something more important than partisanship and political agendas.

This week, each of us will celebrate this special time of year in our own way. For my wife and family, we will turn our thoughts to the birth of a child so long ago.

And may we all take time to think about our military near and far from home this season. Their service requires so much sacrifice and we owe them our thanks and our prayers.

Finally, to you and your family, no matter how you spend these final days of December, may you enjoy much love, joy and peace.

Merry Christmas.